



VICKSBURG – The ‘Fortress City’ | The Land Defenses

Vicksburg was considered a purely defensive position, and Confederate strategic doctrine was tied tightly to this mindset. With the strengthening squeeze of the Federal blockade, the city’s location on the Mississippi River was becoming increasingly more important to the Confederate supply line running from Matamoros, Mexico. Here, materiel from the western states was ferried from Louisiana to Mississippi, to be shipped by railroad to points east. The Confederacy soon came to realize that for its nation’s survival, it was absolutely essential that control of the river be held at Vicksburg.

When Brigadier General Martin Luther Smith arrived to take command of the Vicksburg garrison in May 1862, he immediately began fortifying the city. In June, Major Samuel H. Lockett became chief engineer in charge of developing the defensive perimeter around Vicksburg, repairing and strengthening the river batteries damaged by U.S. Flag Officer David Farragut’s naval squadron, then turning his attention to laying out a line to guard the land approaches to the city. Spending a month reconnoitering, surveying, and studying “*the complicated and irregular site to be fortified,*” he boasted that no greater topographical puzzle was ever presented to a military engineer.

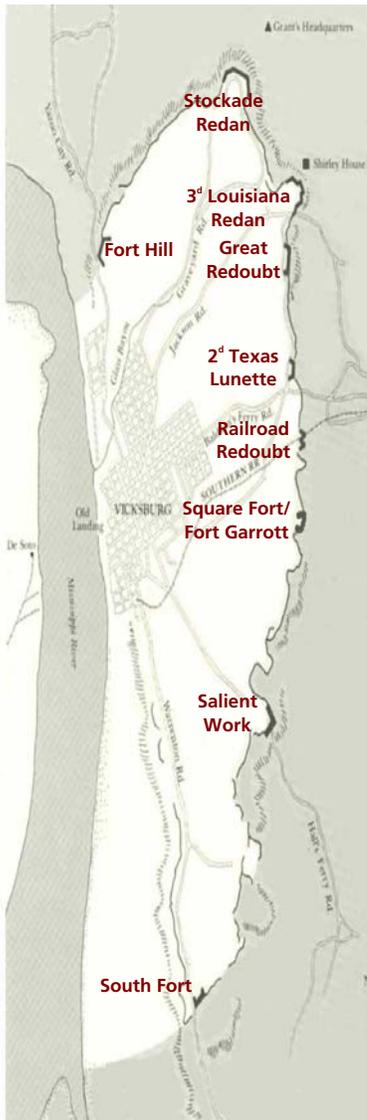
Upon pinpointing the commanding, irregular ridgeline forming a crescent a mile or more beyond the city’s outskirts, Major Lockett laid out a “*system of redoubts, redans, lunettes and field-works, connecting them by rifle-pits so as to give a continuous line of defense.*” Employing a large force of blacks hired, or impressed, from nearby plantations, the work began in early September 1862.

The line was anchored by nine major fortifications and support structures, commanding the land bridges separating the major drainages, six roads and one railroad that led into Vicksburg. The works were composed of exterior ditches six- to ten-feet

deep and at least as wide, with ramparts, 14-foot thick parapets, firing platforms for infantry, and embrasures for artillery. The nine strongpoints were connected by a line of rifle pits having parapets approximately six feet thick, but with no fronting ditch, and artillery positions sited at intervals along the entire front. An added protective measure, which also provided uninterrupted fields of fire, was the removal of all cane and trees in the ravine bottoms in front of the works. The timber was lashed together with telegraph wire to form a broad band of impassable abatis, one of which was 200 yards deep in front of the Stockade Redan, and another of formidable proportions between the Hall’s Ferry Road and Stouts Bayou.

The left flank of the Confederate fortifications was anchored on the Mississippi River, 1-½ mile north of the city, and ran in two lines along the ridge north of Mint Spring Bayou and Fort Hill Ridge, south of the bayou. Where Fort Hill Ridge intersected another watershed at right angles, the two lines converged, and from here the fortifications ran southward along a ridge for about a mile to Glass Bayou gorge and the watershed containing the Jackson Road. From this point they continued in a southerly direction along the divide separating Stouts Bayou from Durden Creek, crossing the Baldwin’s Ferry Road and Southern Railroad. Where the Hall’s Ferry Road entered the city, the divide between the two streams leveled, and the works turned to the southwest, following a ridge separating Stouts Bayou from one of its tributaries. A third of a mile east of where the defenses anchored on the river, the fortifications crossed the Stouts Bayou gorge, and a line of rifle pits extended almost a mile north to the city, following the edge of the bluffs and commanding the narrow triangle of lowland between the Mississippi and these bluffs.

Today many of these defenses are still visible – preserved by those who survived to honor those who sacrificed their all, through the words of officialdom, and those of the soul.



Fort Hill



The left defensive flank of the Confederate fortification line was anchored on the Mississippi River, 1- ½ miles north of the city, near where the river road to Yazoo City entered Vicksburg. **Fort Hill** served as an observation post for the Water Battery, located below and closer to the river. The site was manned by troops from the brigades of General William E. Baldwin, Brigadier General Francis A. Shoup, and Brigadier General John C. Vaughn under the Division of Major General Martin Luther Smith.

Fort Nogales. 1791. Fort Nogales, which was the first settlement at Vicksburg, was established by the Spaniards on this spot in 1791. In 1798, it passed from the possession of Spain to the United States and was re-named Fort McHenry. It was used as a Confederate Fort during the Civil War.

- Iron tablet #915, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

While we were in this camp, the boys having nothing to do, got into the Ordnance Stores of our Army and had a great time with the powder. They would lay trains a hundred yards in length, with a big pile of powder every thirty feet or so, over which they would place a barrel or box. They would then fire the train and when the piles were reached, PLUFF and up would go the box or barrel into the air. They also made a kind of crude Roman candles, by filling canes with powder, in alternate layers of wet and dry. There were thousands of these, and at night they were flying in every direction; I never saw a civic display of fire-works to equal it.

- Lt. Simeon R. Martin, 46th Mississippi Infantry, Co. I, Baldwin's Brigade

C.S. Company B, 14th Mississippi Light Art. Battalion; Smith's Division; Army of Vicksburg. Capt. J.H. Yates. The second section of the company, under Lieut. W.J. Shelton, served two 6-pounder guns and one 24-pounder siege gun in this position, Fort Hill, from the morning of May 19 to about June 12, when the siege gun was disabled by having a trunnion cracked nearly off. It was then loaded with grape and remained in this position, ready to be fired in case of an assault. The two 6-pounder guns were served to the end of the defense, July 4, 1863. Reported casualties in battalion during the defense, wounded 3.

- Iron tablet #913, WPA Monument Survey, 1942



The Union siege line was credited with being so tight that even a cat could not slip through – food and water were rationed, medical supplies limited or nonexistent, and hospitals, such as they were, filled to overflowing. Death due to illness occurred at a much greater rate than from wounds. Rabbit stew and mule meat became looked upon as feasts...

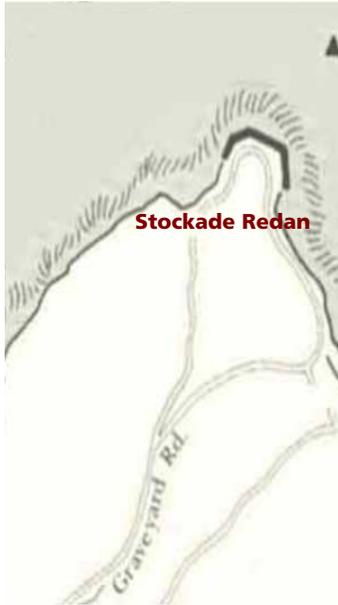
When the siege began, we were receiving one-third of a ration of a meal. This was soon greatly reduced. For several days before the capitulation we had, instead of bacon, about three or four ounces of mule meat. Curl the lip, if you will, ye dainty epicures, but I ween ye never tasted more sweet than 'mule meat and peas' to us. The flesh of the mule seemed of coarser grain but more tender than that of the ox and had a decidedly 'horsey' flavor. To starving men, however, it was very good.

- Pvt. William Chambers, 46th Mississippi Infantry, Co. I, Baldwin's Brigade

C.S. Johnston's Company, Tennessee Heavy Artillery; River Batteries; Army of Vicksburg. Capt. T.N. Johnston. A detachment of the company served one 3-inch rifle in this position, Fort Hill, from May 19 to the end of the defense, July 4, 1863.

- Iron tablet #914, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

Stockade Redan



Where Graveyard Road passed through the perimeter, stood the Stockade Redan complex, given its name from the palisade of poplar logs constructed on the site. The 27th Louisiana Lunette lay north of the road, the Stockade Redan to the south, and a smaller redan, later called Green's Redan, sited 75 yards still further south. It was in this latter work where Brigadier General Martin E. Green declared, "a bullet has not yet been molded that will kill me," just moments before he passed in front of an artillery embrasure and slain by a Union sharpshooter. Defenders in this earthwork complex came from the brigades of Colonel Francis M. Cockrell and Brigadier General Martin E. Green (following his death, Colonel Thomas P. Dockery) under the Division of Major General John S. Bowen, and Brigadier General Louis Hébert's brigade from Major General John H. Forney's Division.

Confederate Position Tablet. Lunette on left of Stockade. This lunette, part of the stockade to its right, and the line to its left were held, the afternoon of May 19, 1863, and the assaults of the Union force repulsed, by the 27th Louisiana Infantry with the Second Missouri Infantry in support. The casualties in the Louisiana Regiment were severe but cannot be accurately stated. The position was held, May 22, and the assaults of the Union force repulsed by the 27th Louisiana and five companies of the 2^d Missouri, with five companies of that regiment in reserve. The casualties cannot be accurately stated. The lunette, the line immediately to its left, the stockade to its right, and the north face of the Stockade Redan were held, after May 25, by the 27th Louisiana. A countermine against the Union approach was prepared at the Stockade, but not fired. Casualties in 27th Louisiana during the defense: killed 58, wounded 96, total 154, Lieut. Col. L.L. McLauren and Lieut. George Harris killed, Col. L.D. Marks mortally wounded.

- Iron tablet #814, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

Once again, hunger was dominant in the minds of the Southern soldiers, and in June, when Confederate larders in Vicksburg began to run low, the commissary was forced to issue improvised rations. Perhaps the most notorious of these experimental foodstuffs was 'pea bread,' a noxious combination made of beans known as cow peas, which local farmers grew for animal feed...

There was a good supply of this pea in the commissariat at Vicksburg, and the idea grew out of the fertile brain of some official, that, if reduced to the form of meal, it would make an admirable substitute for bread. Sagacious and prolific genius! whether general or commissary-originator of this glorious conception! this altogether novel species of the hardest of "hard tack!" perhaps he never swallowed a particle of it. If he did, the truth and force of these comments will be appreciated.

The process of getting the pea into the form of bread was the same as that to which corn is subjected: the meal was ground at a large mill in the city, and sent to the cooks in camp to be prepared. It was accordingly mixed with cold water and put through the form of baking; but the nature of it was such, that it never got done, and the longer it was cooked, the harder it became on the outside, which was natural, but, at the same time, it grew relatively softer on the inside, and, upon breaking it, you were sure to find raw pea-meal in the centre. The cooks protested that it had been on the fire two good hours, but it was all to no purpose; yet, on the outside it was so hard, that one might have knocked down a full-grown steer with a chunk of it. The experiment soon satisfied all parties, and after giving us this bread for three days, it was abandoned. But it had already made a number of us sick. Peas were afterwards issued, boiled in camp, and still constituted about half our subsistence.

- Cpl. Ephraim McD. Anderson, 2nd Missouri Infantry, Co.G, Cockrell's Brigade



Brigadier General
Martin E. Green





Confederate Position Tablet. Stockade Redan on Graveyard Road. This redan, the line immediately to its right, and part of the stockade to its left were held, the afternoon of May 19, 1863, and the assaults of the Union force repulsed, by the 36th Mississippi, with the 5th Missouri in support, on its east face; and the 1st and 4th Missouri (consolidated) on its north face and part of the line of the Stockade. The 3^d Missouri was in reserve. Casualties: in 36th Mississippi, cannot be accurately stated; in Cockrell's Brigade, killed 8, wounded 62, total 70, nearly all in this position. The position was held, May 22, and the assaults of the Union force repulsed by the 36th Mississippi and six companies of the 1st and 4th Missouri on its east face, and the 3^d Missouri on its north face and part of the line of the stockade. Three companies of the 1st and 4th Missouri in reserve, were moved from point to point, as required. Casualties: in Hebert's Brigade, killed 21, wounded 39, total 60; not distributed between this redan and other points on the Brigade line, Major Alexander Yates, 36th Mississippi, killed; in Cockrell's Brigade, killed 28, wounded 95, total 123, nearly all in this position; in 3rd Missouri, of that brigade, killed 12, wounded 52, total 64. The stockade and the north face of the redan were held, after May 25, by the 27th Louisiana. The east face of the redan was held, after June 2, by the left regiment of Green's Brigade. Two countermines against the Union approach, from the ditch of the redan, were fired the night of June 26; another was prepared but not fired.

- Iron tablet #803, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

We found ourselves in close quarters with the enemy, and his contiguity was frequently evidenced by the throwing over into our lines of clods and hand-grenades; the former did no serious damage, but, on one occasion, Lieutenant Gillespie's nose was skinned in a pretty rough manner by a lump of clay that was dried hard in the sun. The hand-grenades were small shells about the size of a goose egg, filled with little bullets, probably larger than buck-shot; they never exploded before striking the ground, and only then when hitting a hard place, as they were fired by friction, and not by fuses. They wounded several of the regiment in the legs, generally slightly, but killed no one within my knowledge, always bursting too low to strike a vital part.

In return for the hand-grenades, our regiment, whose position was more elevated than the enemy's, threw shells, varying from six to ninety pounds, into his works, many of which did great execution; but we did not know it at the time, and this sort of shelling was not kept up: it was only after the siege that we learned, if it had been sustained, especially with the heavy shells, the works there would have been untenable.

Cpl. Ephraim McD. Anderson, 2nd Missouri Infantry, Co.G, Cockrell's Brigade



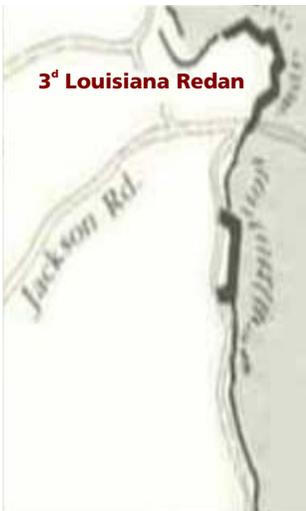
Ketchum grenade

Confederate Position Tablet. Small redan on left of Green's brigade. This redan and the line immediately to its right were held, the afternoon of May 19, 1863, and the assaults of the Union force repulsed, by the 7th Mississippi Infantry Battalion. Its casualties cannot be accurately stated. The position was held, May 22, and the assaults of the Union force repulsed, by the 7th Mississippi Infantry Battalion, the 5th Missouri Infantry, and one company of the 1st and 4th Missouri Infantry (consolidated). The casualties cannot be accurately stated. This redan, after June 2, was held by the 20th Arkansas of Green's Brigade. Gen. Green was killed in it the morning of June 27. Two countermines against the Union approach were prepared, but not fired.

- Iron tablet #788, WPA Monument Survey, 1942



3^d Louisiana Redan



A mile south of Stockade Redan, the Jackson Road entered the Confederate lines, and here two strongholds were positioned – the 3^d Louisiana Redan to the north and Great Redoubt to the south. Located on the highest point in the area, Great Redoubt was deemed the Confederates' most formidable work. Troops defending these two strongholds were from the brigades of Brigadier General Louis Hébert and Brigadier General John C. Moore, under the Division of Major General John H. Forney.

Confederate Position Tablet. Third Louisiana Redan, on left of Jackson Road. This redan was held, May 22, 1863, and the assaults of the Union force repulsed, by the Third Louisiana, with the 43^d Mississippi on its left. The casualties cannot be accurately stated. A Union mine was fired under the redan the afternoon of June 25, almost destroying its front parapet, making a crater in its terreplain, but not injuring a parapet across its gorge. It was then held by the 3^d Illinois, supported by the 6th Missouri, with the 38th Mississippi on the right and the 43^d Mississippi on the left. The Union force assaulted immediately after the mine was fired, occupied the crater and attempted to carry the parapet across the gorge of the redan, but was repulsed. Col. Erwin, 6th Missouri, at the head of some of his men, attempted a countercharge and was killed on top of the parapet. The Union force in the crater was successively relieved by fresh troops, the fighting continued all night and most of the next day, and the position was firmly held. Hand grenades, and shells with lighted fuses in place of grenades, were freely used on both sides. After dark of the 25th, the 5th Missouri reinforced this position. Casualties: 3^d Louisiana, killed 6, wounded 21, total 27; 38th Mississippi, killed 1, wounded 3, total 4; 43^d Mississippi, killed 6 (buried by firing of mine), wounded 5, total 11; 5th Missouri, killed 1, wounded 7, total 8; 6th Missouri, killed 3, wounded 22, total 25, Col. Eugene Erwin and Lieut. W.S. Lipscomb killed; aggregate, killed 17, wounded 58, total 75. The 2^d Missouri was moved to this position the night of June 26, and the 1st and 4th Missouri (consolidated) the evening of July 1. In the afternoon of that day a second mine was fired under the redan, almost completely destroying both its faces and materially damaging the parapet across its gorge, but no assault was made by the Union force. Lieut. Col. Pembroke S. Senteny, 2^d Missouri, and Lieuts. John T. Crenshaw and John Roseberry, 6th Missouri, were killed – Lieut. Crenshaw being buried by the firing of the mine.

- Iron tablet #749, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

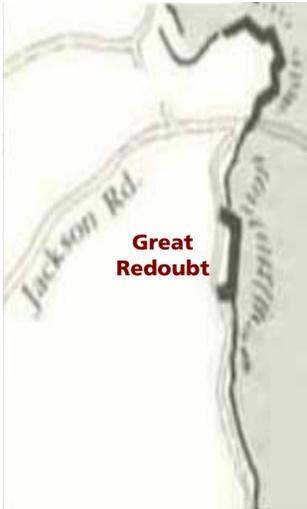
Efforts to neutralize the 3^d Louisiana Redan culminated in the Union army trying to destroy the work by exploding a large charge of gunpowder beneath it. The attempt was dealt a temporary setback, however, when Confederate soldiers developed an ingenious method for eliminating this particular protective 'sap-roller'...

The Federals procured a [train] car-frame, which they placed on wheels, loading it with cotton bales. They pushed this along the Jackson road, in front of the breastworks held by the Third regiment. Protected by this novel, movable shelter, they constructed their works with impunity, and with almost the certainty of eventually reaching our intrenchments. Rifles had no effect on the cotton bales, and there was not a single piece of artillery to batter them down. They were not a hundred yards from the regiment, and the men could only quietly watch their operations, and anxiously await the approaching hand-to-hand struggle... The movable breastwork in front of the intrenchments of the Third Louisiana, became a perfect annoyance to the regiment, and various plans were proposed for its destruction, only to be declared unavailable. Some of the men actually proposed to make a raid on it and set it on fire, a plan which would have been the height of madness... Lieutenant W.M. Washburn of Company B, loaded a rifle, and fired a ball of cotton and turpentine into the hated object. Another and another blazing missile was sent on the mission of destruction, with apparently no satisfactory results, and the attempt was abandoned amid a general disappointment. The men, save those on guard, sought repose, and all the line became comparatively quiet. Suddenly, some one exclaimed, 'I'll be d---d if that thing isn't on fire!' The whole regiment was soon stirring about, like a hive of disturbed bees. Sure enough, smoke was seen issuing from the dark mass. The inventive genius of Lieutenant Washburn had proved a complete success, and the fire, which had smouldered in the dense mass of cotton, was about bursting forth. The men seized their rifles, and five companies were immediately detailed to keep up a constant and rapid fire over the top and at each end of the blazing mass, to prevent the enemy from extinguishing the flames. The Yankees could not understand how their movable breastwork was thus given to destruction under their very eyes.



- Pvt. William H. Tunnard, 3^d Louisiana Infantry, Co. K, Hébert's Brigade

Great Redoubt



Confederate Position Tablet. Great Redoubt on right of Jackson Road. This redoubt was held, May 22, 1863, and the assault of the Union force repulsed, by the 21st Louisiana and Companies C and D, 22^d Louisiana. Casualties: Capt. J. Ryan, 21st Louisiana, and Lieut. R.E. Lehman, 22^d Louisiana, killed; the other casualties cannot be accurately stated. The same commands held the redoubt during the defense. Their casualties were: 21st Louisiana, killed 15, wounded 50, missing 1, total 67, Capt. J. Ryan and Lieut. G.H. Mann killed; 22^d Louisiana (detachment), killed 13, wounded 23, missing 1, total 37, Capt. F. Gomez and Lieut. R.E. Lehman killed.

- Iron tablet #723, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

Hébert's tough veterans from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas were posted near the 3^d Louisiana Redan, north of the Railroad Redoubt, and were able to dig in and weather Grant's pre-attack bombardment with little damage. During the charge of the Union XVII Corps on May 22, they unleashed a hail of lead on the Yankee soldiers as they approached the formidable earthworks.

On the night of the 21st of May preceding this assault, the fratricidal feature of the war was called to our attention in a most pathetic manner. Just on our left was Green's Missouri brigade, and by the irony of fate, a brigade of Missourians, on the Federal side, was directly opposed to them. They discovered this in some way, and until late at night we could hear the Confederates calling to their old neighbors and asking of the loved ones in their far-away homes...Before daylight on the morning of the 22^d the enemy began a tremendous cannonade on our front. It was the grandest and most awe-inspiring scene I ever witnessed. The air was ablaze with burning and bursting shells, darting like fiery serpents across the sky and the earth shook with the thunderous roar. The scene recalled descriptions of the meteoric shower of 1833, only these meteors were too close and too solid for pleasant contemplation. I do not hesitate to assert that coarse print could have been read by the light of these blazing missiles. It would appear almost incredible that but little harm was done by such a fierce cannonade, but so it was. A ditch is almost a perfect protection against a shell fired across it, provided one sits against the side next to the battery. Its momentum carries even the fragments of an exploded shell forward and there is little danger from it. It is only when the messengers of death are dropped from above, or when they enfilade a line of breastworks that they get in their deadly work.

When the cannonade ceased the Federals formed three lines of battle, near the woods, and began a steady advance upon our works...They came on as rapidly as the fallen timber would permit, and in perfect order. We waited in silence until the first line had advanced within easy rifle range, when a murderous fire was opened from the breastworks...Still they never faltered, but came bravely on. It was indeed a gallant sight though an awful one...Surely no more desperate courage than this could be displayed by mortal men. On our left a battle flag was planted upon the walls of a fort held by the 36th Mississippi, and it was waved there defiantly all day until it was carried off at night by its owners, who had found shelter in the ditch outside. This gallant deed was accomplished by an Ohio regiment.

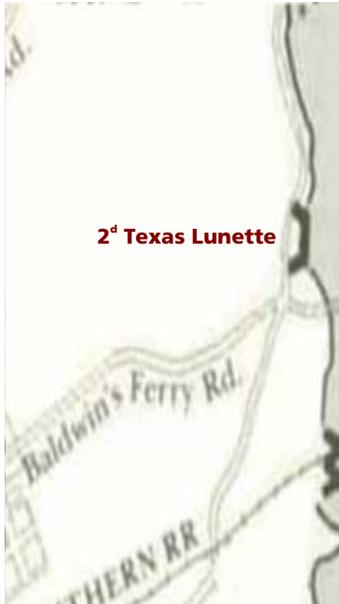
- Capt. James H. Jones, 38th Mississippi Infantry, Co. C, Hébert's Brigade

C.S. Company B, Pointe Coupee Artillery; Maury's-Forney's Div.; Army of Vicksburg. Capt. William A. Davidson. The company served four 3-inch rifles in this position from May 18 to about May 21, when the first section, under Lieut. Jeff J. Thompson, was ordered to a position on the line of Moore's Brigade. One of the rifles of the second section was disabled, about May 22, and about May 24, the detachment that served it, under Lieut. Armand Selle, 22^d Louisiana, was ordered to serve a Whitworth rifle in a work, not in the park, in rear of the line of Moore's Brigade and about 600 yards at left of railroad. The other rifle of the second section was served in this position to the end of the defense, July 4, 1863. Reported casualties in company during the defense: killed 4, wounded 5, total 9, Lieut. Oscar M. D'aubigne killed about May 30; the detachment in this position under Lieut. Ernest C. Legendre after that date.

- Iron tablet #725, WPA Monument Survey, 1942



2^d Texas Lunette



A mile further south, guarding Baldwin's Ferry Road, was the 2^d Texas Lunette, an irregular work with no connecting rifle pits on its left. Forces defending this lunette were also from the brigades of Brigadier General Louis Hébert and Brigadier General John C. Moore, under the Division of Major General John H. Forney, and reinforced by units from Brigadier General Martin E. Green's brigade, under the Division of Major General John S. Bowen.

Confederate Position Table. Lunette on right of Baldwin's Ferry Road. This salient lunette and the lines immediately on its right and left were held, May 22, 1863, and the assaults of the Union force repulsed, by the 2^d Texas Infantry – the right two companies occupying the curtain to the right; the left four companies, the curtain immediately north of the Baldwin's Ferry Road; and four companies in the lunette. The 42^d Alabama held the curtain between the right of the 2^d Texas and the railroad. Green's Brigade, about 1 p.m., reinforced this position; and, about 5 p.m. detachments of the 1st and 3^d Missouri cavalry and of the 1st Arkansas cavalry, dismounted, made a sally from the lunette and materially assisted in repulsing the Union assault on its left flank. Before the end of May the left four companies of the 2^d Texas were moved into the lunette. A countermine against the Union approach was fired, June 28; two others were prepared, but not fired. Both the sap rollers in front of the two Union approaches to this work were burned on July 1. This tablet marks the salient angle of this lunette. Casualties in 2^d Texas during the defense: killed 38, wounded 73, missing 15, total 126, Capt. A.J. Gammell and Lieut. Robert S. Henry killed, Lieut. William F. Kirk mortally wounded.

- Iron tablet #606, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

During the assault of Brigadier General William P. Benton's brigade on May 22, the bravery of Illinois color bearer Thomas H. Higgins so impressed the Texans that they refused to shoot the gallant Yankee. After the war, veterans of Waul's Legion successfully petitioned the Federal government for recognition for their ex-foe's deed. Higgins was eventually awarded the Medal of Honor.

After a most terrific cannonading of two hours, during which the very earth rocked and pulsated like a thing of life, the head of the charging column appeared above the brow of the hill, about 100 yards in front of the breast works, and, as line after line of blue came in sight over the hill, it presented the grandest spectacle the eye of a soldier ever beheld. The Texans were prepared to meet it however, for, in addition to our Springfield rifles, each man was provided with five additional smooth-bore muskets, charged with buck and ball.

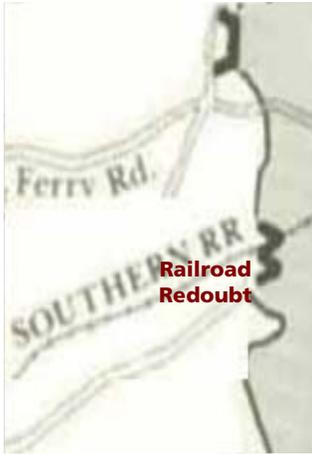
When the first line was within fifty paces of the works, the order to fire ran along the trenches, and was responded to as from one gun. As fast as practiced hands could gather them up, one after another, the muskets were brought to bear. The blue lines vanished amid fearful slaughter. There was a cessation in the firing. And behold, through the pall of smoke which enshrouded the field, a Union flag could be seen approaching.

As the smoke was slightly lifted by the gentle May breeze, one lone soldier advanced, bravely bearing the flag towards the breast works. At least a hundred men took deliberate aim at him, and fired at point-blank range, but he never faltered. Stumbling over the bodies of his fallen comrades, he continued to advance. Suddenly, as if with one impulse, every Confederate soldier within sight of the Union color bearer seemed to be seized with the idea that the man ought not to be shot down like a dog. A hundred men dropped their guns at the same time; each of them seized his nearest neighbor by the arm and yelled to him: 'Don't shoot at that man again. He is too brave to be killed that way.' when he instantly discovered that his neighbor was yelling the same thing at him. As soon as they all understood one another, a hundred old hats and caps went up into the air, their wearers yelling at the top of their voices: 'Come on, you brave Yank, come on!' He did come, and was taken by the hand and pulled over the breast works, and when it was discovered that he was not even scratched, a hundred Texans wrung his hands and congratulated him upon his miraculous escape from death. That man's name was Thomas J. Higgins, color bearer of the Ninety-ninth Illinois.

- Pvt. Charles I. Evans, 2^d Texas Infantry, Co. G, Moore's Brigade



Railroad Redoubt



Several hundred yards south, and parallel to Baldwin's Ferry Road, was the Southern Railroad of Mississippi, running through a deep cut into the city. On the south side of this cut was **Railroad Redoubt**, a fortification also known as Fort Beauregard to the Confederate troops. Surrounded by a ditch 6 to 10 feet deep and 10 to 18 feet wide, with walls that were 20 feet high, this fort could offer an enfilading fire of musketry and artillery in almost every direction. The interior was divided into approximately three equal segments by traverses at right angles to the face of the main parapet, and an artillery piece was manned in each segment. The open gorge to the rear of the fortification was guarded by a second line of rifle pits, manned by troops from the brigades of Brigadier General Stephen D. Lee and Brigadier General Alfred Cumming, under the Division of Major General Carter L. Stevenson. It was the only work breached by Union forces during the assault of May 22.

Confederate Position Tablet. The Railroad Redoubt. This salient redoubt was occupied, May 22, 1863, by a detachment of the 30th Alabama, supported by two companies, under Major O. Steele, of Waul's Texas Legion. The entrenchment in rear was held by the 30th Alabama, reinforced during the day, by the 46th Alabama under command of Lieut. Col. E.W. Pettus, 20th Alabama – a large part of the 46th, including all its field officers, having been captured, May 16, in the battle of Champion's Hill. About 11 a.m., a detachment of the Union assaulting force reached the ditch of the redoubt and placed flags on its parapet; a small party entered this work at its salient angle, where a breach had been made by the Union artillery, captured a Lieut. and a few enlisted men, held the redoubt a short time and then retired to its ditch, after sustaining severe loss. This work was retaken about 5:30 p.m. by a detachment of Capt. Bradley's and Lieut. Hogue's companies of Waul's Texas Legion, led by Lieut. Col. E.W. Pettus, 20th Alabama; later in the evening, a Lieut. Col. and about 58 men were captured in the ditch. The casualties in the commands defending and recapturing the redoubt on that day cannot be accurately stated. After May 22, during the defense, this work was held by companies of the 46th Alabama. Countermines against the Union approaches were prepared and one was fired the night of July 2. This tablet marks the salient angle at which the assaulting party entered this redoubt on May 22. Casualties in the 46th Alabama during the defense, killed 15, wounded 45, total 60.

- Iron tablet #329, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

Following the haphazard and futile assault on the Confederate defenses on May 19, 1863, a carefully coordinated operation was set for Friday, May 22, all along the Union siege line. Before the infantry attack, General Grant ordered an artillery barrage from every battery in position. Simultaneously skirmishers began sniping at the defenders and Porter's gunboats opened up on the Vicksburg entrenchments from the river. The firing lasted for four hours. Then at 10 a.m...

As if by magic every gun and rifle stopped firing. The silence was almost appalling. Suddenly there seemed to spring almost from the bowels of the earth dense masses of Federal troops, in numerous columns of attack, and with loud cheers and huzzahs, they rushed forward at a run with bayonets fixed, not firing a shot, headed for every salient along the Confederate lines..

- Brigadier General Stephen D. Lee, 2^d Brigade, Stevenson's Division

Approximately 12 Federal soldiers, led by Sergeants Joseph E. Griffith and Nicholas G. Messenger, leaped into the ditch, climbed the parapet, and entered Railroad Redoubt through the breach blasted in the salient angle by Union artillery. Fighting continued over the next several hours, but with no decisive outcome, a situation much the same along the entire front of the Union assault. Savage combat continued in Railroad Redoubt as Confederate General Stephen D. Lee desperately and repeatedly ordered troops to retake the fort. Unable to get any volunteers, he turned in despair to Colonel Thomas Waul and asked if his Texans could drive out the Union soldiers. Answering in the affirmative, Colonel Waul surged forward with his men, sweeping the Federal forces before them and sealing the breach in the Redoubt's salient, ending any chance of a Union breakthrough of the Confederate defenses.



Square Fort/ Fort Garrott



Brigadier General
Isham Garrott



One-half mile south, on the ridge intersecting the defensive perimeter, was the redoubt known as **Square Fort**, later renamed **Fort Garrott** in honor of Colonel Isham Garrott (posthumously commissioned Brigadier General), killed by a sniper on the redoubt's parapet. The site was defended by regiments from the brigades of Brigadier General Stephen D. Lee and Brigadier General Alfred Cumming, under the Division of Major General Carter L. Stevenson.

Confederate Position Tablet. Fort Garrott, on right of Lee's Brigade. This work and the line immediately on its left were held by the 20th Alabama. No direct assault was made on it, May 22, 1863, by the Union force, but the fire from this work materially sided in repulsing the assault of Osterhaus' division on the line to its left. Col. Isham W. Garrott was killed, June 17, on duty in this fort, and Lieut. Col. E.W. Pettus commanded the regiment from that time until the end of the defense. Two countermines against the Union approach were prepared, but not fired. The casualties in the 20th Alabama during the defense cannot be accurately stated.

- Iron tablet #272, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

When the morning of May 23, 1863, dawned, Confederate General Stephen D. Lee was not too surprised to see that the Yankees had dug in all across the front of Square Fort.

Lee quickly identified the unit facing him as Hovey's Division of McClelland's corps. The information was not encouraging. The relative inactivity of the Yankees on his front confused him, because Hovey had been aggressive beyond belief at Champion Hill. It seemed completely out of character. Then, suddenly, on the night of 15 June, the inactivity came to an end. At first light the next morning, the Confederates discovered that a new line of rifle pits had been dug overnight. The pits started a mere 125 yards southeast of Square Fort and continued to the east at about the same distance from the Confederate works until they terminated only 75 yards from the Confederate line, about 500 yards northeast of Square Fort. The line was so strong that Lee made no effort to interfere with it. Furthermore, it became extremely dangerous to look over the parapets, because any head that showed against the skyline drew multiple blasts of sniper fire.

The Confederates stood the fire almost without reply for several days, but the strain of being fired upon without being able to reply effectively slowly built to an intolerable level. At last, on 17 June, Col. Garrott of the 20th Alabama could stand it no longer; he seized a rifle from one of his men and jumped to the firing step of Square Fort to relieve his pent-up frustration. Before he could find a target, a Yankee sniper tumbled him back into the arms of his men, a bullet through his heart. Thenceforth, the earthwork was called Fort Garrott in his honor.

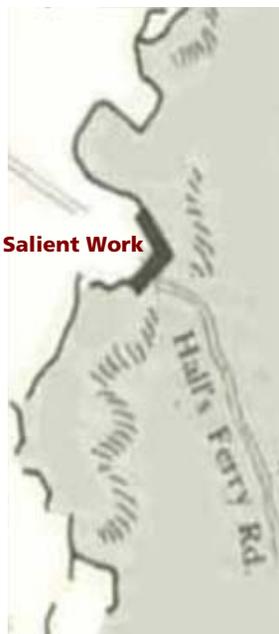
Boredom is the great enemy of both sides in a long siege. The participants lose sight of the objectives and instead turn to ways of making life more comfortable. Vicksburg was no exception. Before long, over extended sections of lines, an unofficial understanding banned fighting or firing at night. Friendly relations between the pickets led to an exchange of news, as well as trading coffee for tobacco. The Rebels had an unlimited supply of the latter, while the Yankees had a monopoly on the former. Both sides thought they were getting the better end of the bargain.

When the heads of the saps began to get close enough to the ditch of Fort Garrott to constitute a realistic threat, however, Lee and his regimental commanders realized that the nightly truce was being used by the Yankees to their considerable advantage. They worked like beavers during the night and didn't even bother to use sap-rollers.

Finally, on 28 June, Col. E. Pettus, commander of 20th Alabama, decided to put a stop to it. During the night, he made contact with the Union officer directing the sappers and told him firmly that he had five minutes to get his men back to the shelter of the Federal lines. The Federal officer considered the proposal for a moment, and then remarked thoughtfully that there was an awful lot of artillery in the Union lines just waiting for a hostile move. Pettus and Lee were less than enthralled by the prospect of repairing their earthworks after having them chewed to bits by the Union artillery. The truce held.

- From Warren E. Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days: A Geographer's View of the Vicksburg Campaign*

Salient Work



Situated a mile further south was the **Salient Work**, overlooking Hall's Ferry Road, and so-called because of its advanced position in front of the general line. Emplacing two guns, the earthwork was manned by troops from the brigades of Colonel Alexander W. Reynolds and Brigadier General Seth M. Barton under the Division of Major General Carter L. Stevenson.

Confederate Position Tablet. Salient Work on left of Hall's Ferry Road. This work was held by the right companies of the 57th Georgia under command of Lieut. Col. C.S. Guyton. No assault was made on it by the Union force. Two sorties were made from this work by its garrison, reinforced by the left companies of the 43^d Tennessee of Reynolds' brigade. In the last one, the night of June 22, 1863, a Lieut. Col. and five men were captured, part of the Union Trench was filled, and the next night, a counter trench from this work was begun. The ground gained was held until the night of June 24, when it was retaken by the Union force. A countermine against the Union approach was repaired, but not fired. The casualties in the 57th Georgia during the defense cannot be accurately stated.

- Iron tablet #135, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

One of the most interesting events that occurred during the great siege of Vicksburg was the quick courtship and marriage of Captain James P. Burem and Miss Nettie Green.

Captain Burem was a native of Hawkins county, Tennessee, born April 18, 1839. He enlisted as a private in Company G, Thirty-First Tennessee Regiment, but rapidly rose to the rank of Captain. His command was in Vicksburg, and on an early morning in March, while returning to camp from picket duty, with another officer he called at a house on the way, where a young lady was playing 'Annie Laurie.' He fell in love with the beautiful player at sight, and they were married on April 15th. The wedding was a sensation, and in response to a serenade he made a thrilling speech.

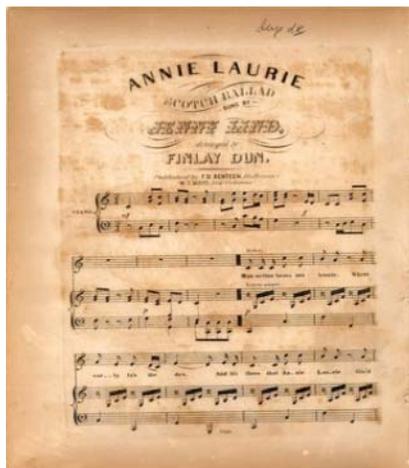
After the capitulation of Vicksburg, Captain Burem called upon General Grant, who graciously gave him permission to take a carriage and servant with his bride through the lines. They visited his home in Hawkins county, where he remained but a short time.

After being exchanged, he reorganized his company, and was soon at the front. Near Piedmont, Virginia, on the ill-fated Sunday of June 5, 1864, he was killed while resisting an assault by the enemy. Captain Burem's body was never recovered, but his father erected a handsome monument to his memory in the family burying ground in his native county.

- Confederate Veteran, July 1895

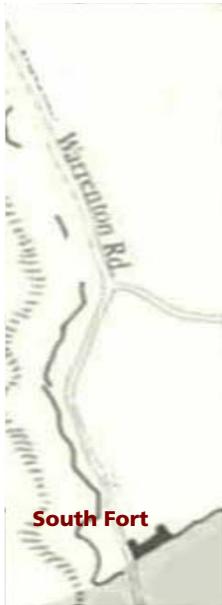
Cumming's Brigade; Stevenson's Division; Army of Vicksburg. Two pieces of artillery, kind and caliber unknown, were served in this work from May 18 to the end of the defense, July 4, 1863, probably by a detachment of either Guibor's, Landis', or Wade's Battery.

- Iron tablet #134, WPA Monument Survey, 1942



Captain James P. Burem

South Fort



Securing the Confederate right flank was **South Fort**, 1- $\frac{3}{4}$ miles south of the Salient Work, and just west of Warrenton Road. Originally part of Vicksburg's river defenses, the big guns mounted here at first could only register on the river. But provision was soon made so the cannon could be quickly shifted to bear on Warrenton Road, in the event the city was attacked from the land side. These guns soon became the most powerful weapons emplaced in the land defenses around the city. The site was manned by troops from the brigades of Colonel Alexander W. Reynolds and Brigadier General Seth M. Barton under the Division of Major General Carter L. Stevenson.

Company G, 1st Louisiana Heavy Artillery; River Batteries; Army of Vicksburg. Capt. William C. Capers. A detachment of the company, under Lieut. C.A. Conrad, served one 10-inch mortar in this position, South Fort, from May 18 to June 12, when the detachment was ordered to a work in rear of the line of Moore's Brigade. It served the mortar in that position to about June 29, when the detachment was ordered back to this fort and served the mortar to the end of the defense, July 4, 1863.

- Iron tablet #13, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

The Boa Constrictor is drawing his coils around us with all his strength. He has found that he cannot kill his victims at one stroke with his fangs, so he has concluded to crush us out by the Squeezing process. We have stood his 'bite' and we will not be intimidated by his touch. Our men are determined to meet any shock they may bring against them; and if human effort can hold them in check we will hold them at bay till the day of relief...On Wednesday the 27th we witnessed one of the grandest and most terrific scenes that had taken place lately. About 9 oc A.M. Three of thier Iron Clads From below began to steam up the River. When they reached the point opposite our fortifications, they then opened upon us. Broadside after Broadside and the fire from thier for Guns as are now poured upon us with all the fury that human skill can invent and power execute. The Boats moved up slowly, keeping up a continuous fire. It seemed to me that the thunder of Heaven had broken up from the Bowels of the Mistress of waters that even Jove had taken this as hit time to deal out the bolts he has been forging for centuries past. The air was filled with thier shells and the fragments. In fact each and every place was filled with thier missiles. This continued for three long hours and one, unaccustomed to such, would have said that no living flesh could survive this fiery ordeal. But strange to say not a life or a limb was lost, except for a few mules. Surely an All-wise Providence protected us with his Shield. And did not allow a hair of our heads to be harmd.

When they came within Range our Batteri's paid thier respects in becoming manner. After many rounds a shot from one of large Guns entered the side of one of the ugly monsters and tore off a large part the other side iron and all. They took the hint and steamd down the River out of range of our guns. Where they have remained up to this time; and I presume will for a while at least.

- Major Raleigh S. Camp, 40th Georgia Infantry, Field & Staff Officer, Barton's Brigade

Company G, 1st Louisiana Heavy Artillery; River Batteries; Army of Vicksburg, Capt. William C. Capers. A detachment of the company, under personal command of Capt. William C. Capers, served one 10-inch Columbiad in this position, South Fort, from May 18 to the end of the defense, July 4, 1863.

- Iron tablet #12, WPA Monument Survey, 1942

Company A, 14th Mississippi Light Art. Battalion; Smith's Division, Army of Vicksburg. Capt. C.B. Vance. The first section of the company, under Lieuts. T.H. Cunningham and B.T. Mathews, served two 12-pounder howitzers in this position, South Fort, from about May 26 to about June 15, 1863, when the section with its howitzers was ordered to a position on the left of Vaughn's Brigade.

- Iron tablet #11, WPA Monument Survey, 1942



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